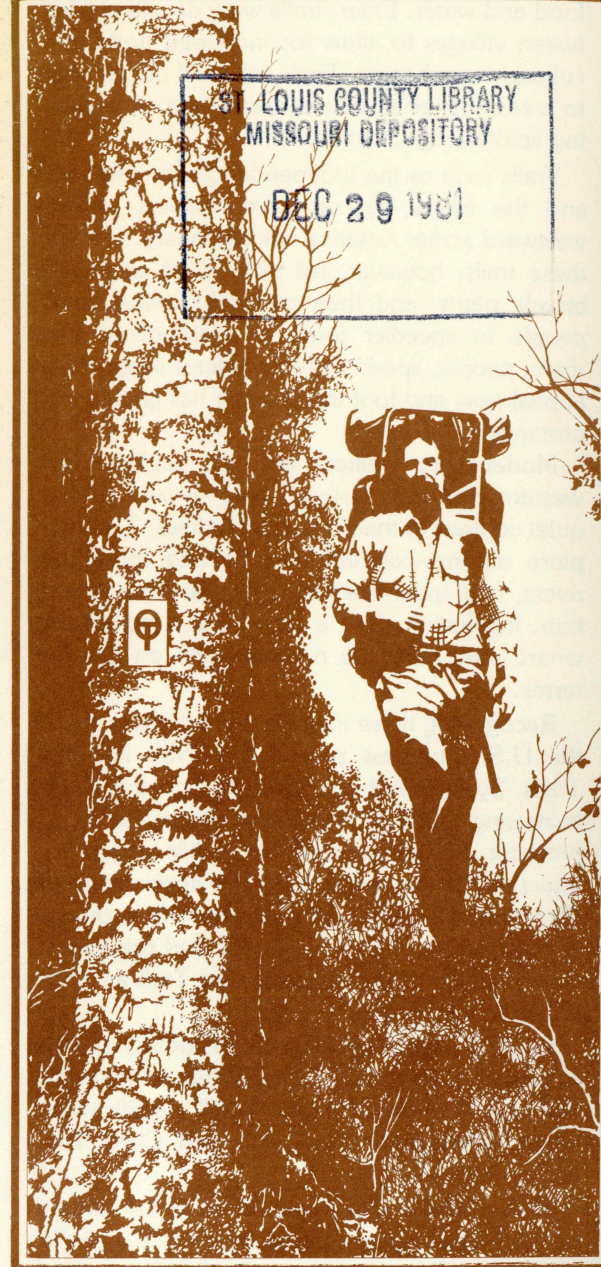
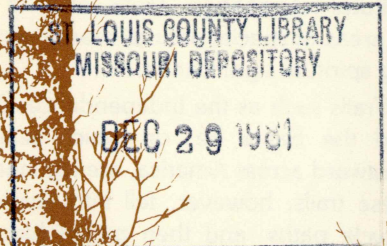


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THE OZARK TRAIL



For more specific information concerning the Ozark Trail you may contact:

Missouri Department of Natural Resources (Coordinator)

P. O. Box 176
Jefferson City, MO 65102
(314) 751-3443

Missouri Department of Conservation

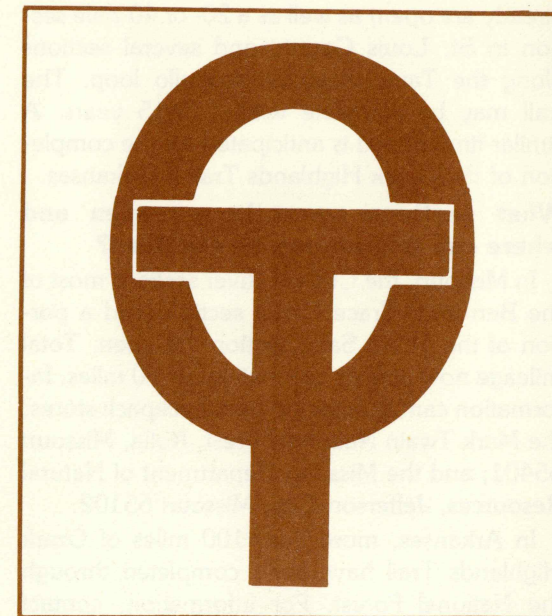
P. O. Box 180
Jefferson City, MO 65102
(314) 751-4115

Mark Twain National Forest

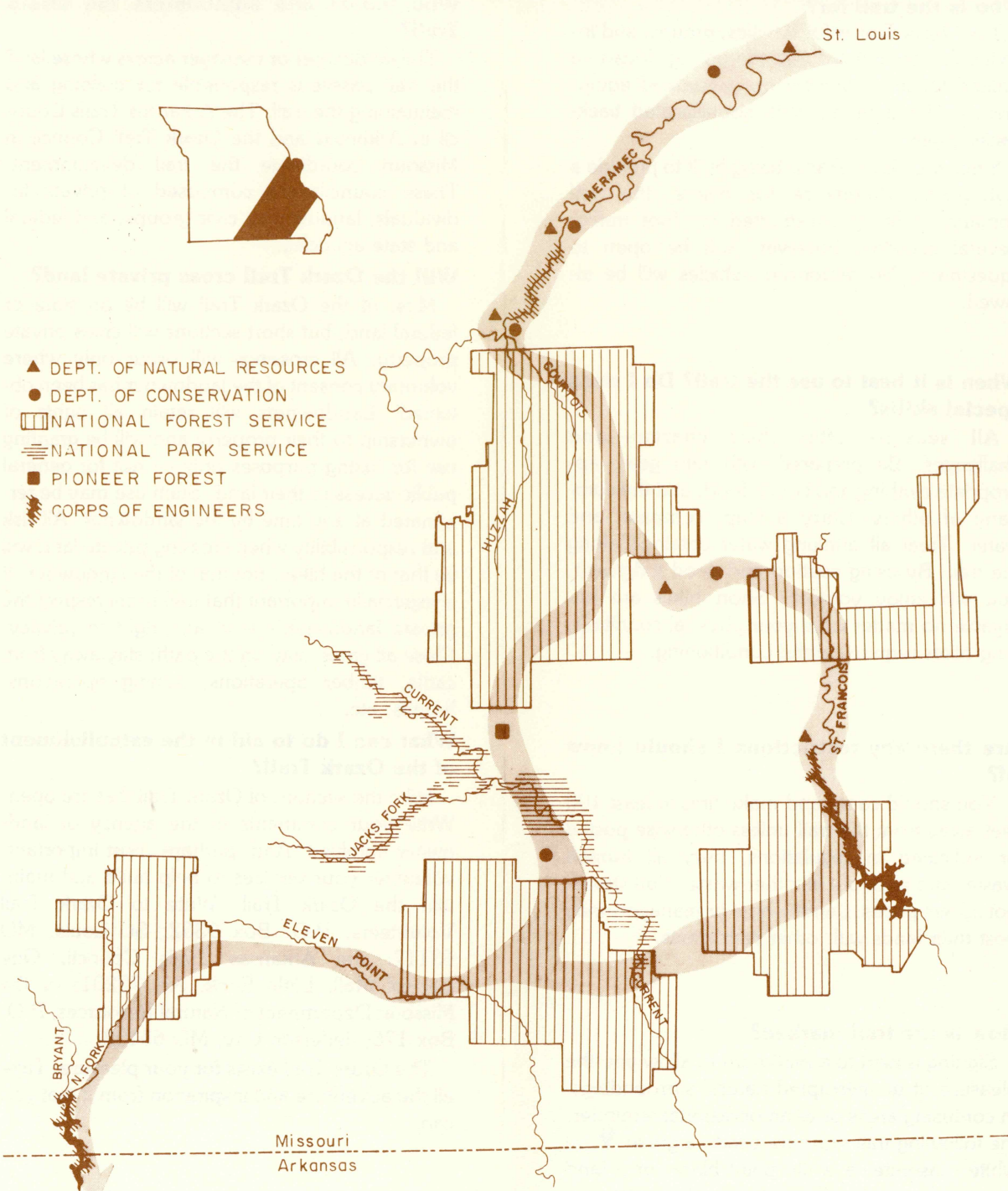
P. O. Box 937
Rolla, MO 65401
(314) 364-4621

Ozark National Scenic Riverways

P. O. Box 448
Van Buren, MO 63965
(314) 323-4236



Ozark Trail



- ▲ DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES
- DEPT. OF CONSERVATION
- ▨ NATIONAL FOREST SERVICE
- ▨ NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
- PIONEER FOREST
- ▨ CORPS OF ENGINEERS

The Ozark Trail

Trails have laced the earth's surface for countless centuries. Early human beings followed game trails, and eventually wore trails of their own as they migrated and searched for food and water. Later, trails were developed between villages to allow for increased trade and cultural interchange. Trails, also, of course, led to areas of special natural beauty and areas having spiritual significance.

Trails such as the Independence, the Oregon, and the Santa Fe, on which settlers moved westward across America, are legendary. Most of these trails, however, fell into disuse as paved bicycle paths and then paved highways lured people to speedier forms of locomotion. For many people, speed has lost at least some of its appeal now and foot travel again has gained importance.

Modern-day walkers are not settling new western frontiers; instead, they usually seek a quiet contrast to their often-hectic lives. They explore autumn-colored hills, rushing spring-fed rivers, and quiet hollows. They seek revitalization, inspiration, and a new kind of adventure where they meet the natural world on its own terms.

Recognizing these important functions of trails, the U.S. Congress passed the 1968 National Trails System Act to *"provide for the ever-increasing outdoor recreation needs...and...to promote the preservation of, public access to, travel within, and enjoyment and appreciation of the open-air outdoor areas and historic resources of the Nation..."* This act designated the Pacific Crest Trail and the Appalachian Trail as "National Scenic Trails."

In 1978, legislation designated additional trails as part of the National Trails System and created the new "National Historic Trail" classification, which will include the Lewis and Clark Trail across Missouri.

These federal acts created a favorable climate for trail development throughout the nation. In Missouri, trail development has increased

dramatically in the past few years; county, state, and federal agencies have built several hundred miles of short interpretive and weekend backpack trails, but even these efforts fall short in meeting trail needs.

The Missouri Ozarks, especially rich in the scenic variety hikers seek, have caused many hikers and agencies to envision a trail that would traverse the Ozarks from St. Louis through western Arkansas. Now, through a unique cooperative effort, this vision of a trail more than 500 miles long - the Ozark Trail - is becoming a reality.

Where will the Ozark Trail be located and when will it be completed?

The attached map shows the general location of the trail; the exact location will be publicized as sections are finished. While the exact completion date cannot be determined, a 200-mile section from Huzzah Wildlife Area to the Eleven Point River should be open by 1985 (some sections already are open) as well as a 20- or 40-mile section in St. Louis County and several sections along the Taum Sauk-Wappapello loop. The trail may be complete within 10-15 years. A similar time period is anticipated for the completion of the Ozark Highlands Trail in Arkansas.

What sections currently are open and where can information be obtained?

In Missouri, the Current River section, most of the Berryman-Trace Creek section, and a portion of the Taum Sauk section are open. Total mileage now open is approximately 90 miles. Information can be obtained from backpack stores; the Mark Twain National Forest, Rolla, Missouri 65401; and the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, Jefferson City, Missouri 65102.

In Arkansas, more than 100 miles of Ozark Highlands Trail have been completed through the National Forest. For information, contact Arkansas Trails Council, One Capitol Mall, Little Rock, Arkansas 72201.

Who is the trail for?

The Ozark Trail is for families, groups, and individuals...for the old and the young. It can be walked for an hour with no specialized equipment or for a month with sophisticated backpacking gear.

Since the Ozark Trail is being built to provide a high-quality experience for hikers, the trail primarily is being constructed for foot traffic. Several sections, however, will be open to equestrians. No motorized vehicles will be allowed.


When is it best to use the trail? Do I need special skills?

All seasons offer their charms---and challenges. Be prepared with rain gear, appropriate clothing and boots, food, and the company of others. Carry a map, compass, and water. Treat all drinking water obtained along the trail. By using caution and good judgment, you will enjoy yourself. Short hikes are enjoyable no matter what your physical condition; long hikes require careful conditioning.

Are there any restrictions I should know of?

You should camp and make fires at least 100 feet away from the trail unless otherwise posted or indicated in regulations, bury all human waste, and pack out all other waste. You should not collect plants. Landowners or managers may post their lands with other restrictions.

How is the trail marked?

Signing is kept to a minimum to allow you the pleasure of uninterrupted natural surroundings. In confusing areas or as an occasional reminder, the following trail signs are used: a green  on white masonite, a white paint blaze, or a land manager's marker (for instance, the white diamond of the U.S. Forest Service).

Who builds and administers the Ozark Trail?

The landowner or manager across whose land the trail passes is responsible for building and maintaining the trail. The Arkansas Trails Council in Arkansas and the Ozark Trail Council in Missouri coordinate the trail development. These councils are composed of private individuals, landowners, civic groups, and federal and state agencies.

Will the Ozark Trail cross private land?

Most of the Ozark Trail will be on state or federal land, but short sections will cross private property. All crossings will occur only where voluntary consent of the landowner has been obtained. Landowners will retain all rights of ownership to their property and will be granting use for hiking purposes only --- not for general public access to their land. Such use may be terminated at any time by the landowner. All risk and responsibility when crossing private land will be that of the hiker, not that of the landowner. It is especially important that trail users respect the private landowner's land and right to privacy. Close all gates; stay on the path; stay away from cattle, timber operations, mining operations, homes, etc.

What can I do to aid in the establishment of the Ozark Trail?

Hike the sections of Ozark Trail that are open. Write your comments to the agency or landowner involved. And, perhaps most important, volunteer your services to help build and maintain the Ozark Trail. Write to Ozark Trail Volunteers, P.O. Box 9362, St. Louis, MO 63117; the Arkansas Trails Council, One Capitol Mall, Little Rock, AR 72201; or the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, P.O. Box 176, Jefferson City, MO 65102.

The Ozark Trail exists for your pleasure. Take all the adventure and inspiration from it that you can.
